

A: But let me just say this: it would have been difficult to acknowledge any form of a misleading statement. Is that what you're after?

Q: That is one point of it.

A: Yeah, it would have been. Sure. Sure.<sup>650</sup>

When he appeared before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs on Oct. 30, 1997, Secretary Babbitt swore an oath to tell the truth and then read a brief prepared statement, which said, in pertinent part:

In sum, the allegations that there was improper White House or DNC influence and that I was a conduit for that influence are demonstrably false. There is no connection at either end of the alleged conduit. At one end, as I have stated, I did not speak to Mr. Ickes or anyone else at the White House or the DNC, and at the other end, I did not direct my subordinates to reach any particular decision on this matter, although during my watch, the Department's policy has been not to approve off-reservation Indian gaming establishments over the objections of reluctant communities. The Hudson decision reflected that policy and nothing else.

That should end the matter, and I suppose it would have ended the matter had I not muddied the waters somewhat in my letters to Senator McCain - Senators McCain and Thompson in describing a meeting that I had with Mr. Paul Eckstein on July 14, 1995.<sup>651</sup>

\* \* \* \*

Mr. Eckstein . . . asked to meet with me. Against my better judgment, I acceded to that requests. [sic] When he persistently pressed for a delay in the decision, I sought to terminate the meeting. I don't recall exactly what was said, but on reflection, I probably said that Mr. Ickes, the Department's point of contact on many Interior matters, wanted the Department or expected the Department to decide the matter promptly. If I said that, it was an awkward effort to terminate an uncomfortable meeting on a personally sympathetic note, but as I have said here today, I had no such communication with Mr. Ickes or anyone else from the White House.

---

<sup>650</sup>*Id.* at 155.

<sup>651</sup>Babbitt Senate Test. at 238.